Action Sheet 17

Education

🔑 Key Message

Education is both a basic human right and an essential tool for protection. When provided in a safe learning environment, education can be both life-saving and life-sustaining. It can prevent exposure to serious protection risks, help individuals and communities to cope with the effects of displacement, and facilitate reconciliation and reintegration once displacement ends. It is crucial to ensure that internally displaced persons, including children and adolescents, have full and equal access to education during all stages of displacement.

> The **Minimum Standards on Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction** provide minimum standards, indicators and guidance notes on ensuring access to quality education in humanitarian settings. The Standards are available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Urdu, Japanese, Thai, Bahasa Indonesian, and Bangla, at **www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1240**

1. The importance of education

Ensuring full and equal access to education in situations of internal displacement is both an aim in itself and an important tool of protection. Education provides people with access to life-saving and life-sustaining skills and knowledge, and, if provided in a safe learning environment, it can:

■ Help reduce exposure to serious protection risks, such as sexual violence and exploitation, forced recruitment, trafficking, or forced and hazardous labour.

■ Convey key messages about protection risks and concerns, such as landmines, sanitation and hygiene, and nutrition.

■ Provide a basis for sustainable livelihoods and successful social and economic (re)integration into society.

■ Mitigate the psycho-social impact of conflict and displacement by providing a degree of stability and normalcy, in particular for children and adolescents.

■ Contribute to peace and reconciliation by promoting understanding and tolerance.

> **Different forms of education**
>
> **Formal education** usually results in the attainment of recognized certificates or diplomas. It includes primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as formal vocational trainings.
>
> **Non-formal education** is usually undertaken in less formal settings and does not necessarily lead to recognized certificates and diplomas. It includes various semi structured recreational and learning activities in child friendly spaces.

2. Obstacles to full and equal access to education in situations of internal displacement

Education, vocational training and other learning activities are often disrupted during conflict and displacement. Internally displaced persons face numerous obstacles in accessing safe education, such as:

■ **Lack of adequate educational facilities** – School buildings and/or grounds may be lacking or be inadequate, for instance because they have been damaged or lack heating, electricity or sanitation facilities. They may also be occupied by displaced

persons in need of shelter or be located in places that are inaccessible, for instance because of lack of safe transport.

■ **Lack of resources** – Loss of homes, land and livelihoods often results in poverty and marginalisation and internally displaced persons may lack the resources to pay for tuition, books, clothing, school supplies and/or meals. Children and adolescents, in particular girls, are often required to work or assist with domestic chores, and as a result may not be able to attend school.

■ **Discrimination –** Access to education can be limited as a result of discrimination, for instance on grounds of gender, ethnic or linguistic background. Displacement can both compound such discrimination and give rise to additional discriminatory practices. As an example, displaced children are often unable to enrol in school in the place of displacement because they lack the necessary documentation or are unable to meet strict admissions and enrolment procedures.

■ **Lack of safety and security –** Children can be exposed to various protection risks *en route* to or while attending school, for instance as a result of direct or indiscriminate military attacks, forced recruitment practices, or the presence of landmines.

■ **Lack of safe learning environments –** Conflict and displacement can undermine the safety of the learning environment. Peer-to-peer violence, corporal punishment, sexual abuse or exploitation, lack of qualified staff, and inadequate monitoring and supervision within the education system, can discourage children and adolescents from attending school and contribute to high drop-out rates.

3. The role of human rights and humanitarian actors

Human rights and humanitarian actors play an important role in ensuring full and equal access to education. This includes advocating with national authorities and, where appropriate, assisting them in ensuring that all internally displaced children and adolescents have full and equal access to education, vocational training and other learning opportunities. In some cases, schools and/or vocational training programmes may also be run by humanitarian or other actors.

Internally displaced children and adolescents should have full and equal access to education and every effort should be made to ensure their (re)integration into the national educational system. Where access to formal education has been temporarily disrupted immediate action should be taken to provide semi-structured learning and psycho-social support in safe spaces for children and adolescents. Such activities can contribute to their physical, mental and emotional well-being and facilitate their transition back into the formal school system. The following table provides basic guidance on the steps that should be followed when addressing lack of education in emergency settings.

In our work we can …	
Immediate response	Work with the community to provide children and adolescents with semi-structured educational activities in a safe and child-friendly space. Such activities should be age and gender-sensitive, and be designed, planned and implemented by or together with the displaced community, including displaced teachers, community leaders, parents, and older children and adolescents with basic teaching capabilities. This may, for instance, include: ● Basic numeracy and literacy classes. ● Recreational activities (sport, music, games or art) aimed at alleviating trauma and psycho-social distress. ● Information about risk and ways to avoid these, including mine awareness, disease prevention, basic hygiene, etc.

Part V – 17

	• Psycho-social support and referral mechanisms.
Initial assessment *(see Part III.1)* 📖	Work with national authorities as well as displaced community to assess if and to what extent displaced children and adolescents can be integrated into the formal educational system in the place of displacement. This may include assessing: • The number, level and profile of displaced students and teachers. • The capacity of the local school system and its ability to cater for IDPs. • The obstacles experienced by IDPs (legal, economical, cultural, institutional). • Any documentation and certification requirements. • The need for special or additional schooling or training for children, parents, or teachers to enable their full participation in the system, including the need for language classes, peace education, positive discipline, prevention of GBV, etc.
Advocacy *(see Part IV.3)* 📖	Advocate with relevant authorities to ensure full and equal access to education for all, including the internally displaced. This may include ensuring that: • displaced children have full and equal access to the formal educational system, including local schools and learning opportunities. • displaced teachers can be employed in local schools without discrimination. • strict enrolment and/or admissibility criteria are eased or applied with flexibility so as not to exclude the internally displaced (e.g. documentation requirements). • adequate facilities and resources are provided to enable schools and other educational institutions to cater for internally displaced persons. This may include enlarging or improving existing school infrastructure or establishing new institutions or subsidiary classes.
Reintegration into the formal education system	Assist relevant authorities to build the capacity of the national education system in order to facilitate the integration of the internally displaced persons at the earliest opportunity (within 6-12 months maximum). This may include: • Providing support for the rehabilitation of existing institutions and/or the building of new schools and educational facilities. • Providing or supporting the development of educational materials. • Supporting measures aimed at ensuring safe learning environments. • Provide training for teachers and instructions, including in subjects such as peace education, psycho-social support, and prevention of GBV. • Provide targeted support to individuals that may face specific obstacles to accessing education or vocational training, including orphaned children, adolescent girls, and teenage mothers.
Monitoring and evaluation *(see Part IV.1 and Part III.3)* 📖	Ensure that all education activities, both formal and non-formal, are monitored and evaluated on regular basis through participatory methods involving students, parents, teachers and other educational staff. In particular, ensure that adequate monitoring, reporting and referral mechanisms are established in order to ensure adequate follow-up on incidents of sexual violence or exploitation, peer-to-peer violence, corporal punishment and other abuse, and increases in drop-out rates.

Do you have suggestions about other activities? If so, please share them with us at **hqidphb@unhcr.org**

Key considerations

Several key considerations should guide efforts to ensure full and equal access to education.

- **Equal access** – Both the displaced and the host population should have full and equal access to education and all education activities should thus target the community as a whole. The creation of parallel or separate institutions or activities should be avoided

where possible in order to avoid stigma and discrimination. Distribution of school kits, school materials, and/or financial support for educational purposes should similarly be made available to both groups.

- **Community-based approach** – The participation of the displaced and the host community, including students, parents and teachers (of both sexes), is essential to create a sense of ownership and ensure that activities are adapted to the local cultural and social context. The community should participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of education activities and form part of the decision-making process at all stages. The community can, for example, organize alternative childcare to enable girls to attend school, provide escort to and from school, and help define codes of conduct for education staff. Students can also play an active role through peer-to-peer support, dissemination of life-saving messages in a child-friendly manner, and mentoring. In order to ensure effective participation, parents and students should have access to information, be represented in school management or education committees, and be provided with training on human rights and other issues.

- **Keeping children safe** – Schools and other learning spaces must be safe and secure in order to avoid exposing children and adolescent to violence, exploitation and other protection risks. This includes ensuring that:

  - Schools and their surroundings, including latrines, are safe, gender-sensitive and child-friendly.
  - All education staff, both national and international, has decent working conditions, respect a code of conduct, and receive basic training on topics such as teaching methodology, human rights, prevention of sexual violence and exploitation, psycho-social support, and positive discipline. The recruitment of female teachers and assistants should be promoted.
  - The curriculum and teaching methodology should be participatory and aim to promote peace, reconciliation and constructive dialogue, including life-skills education.
  - Students should be informed of their rights (and responsibilities), be familiar with available monitoring and referral mechanisms, and the code of conduct governing the work of teachers and other educational staff.
  - Parents and any parents-teachers associations should be involved in keeping their children safe, and monitoring the safety of learning spaces.

- **A holistic approach** – Education cannot be provided in isolation and important linkages must be forged with other sectors, such as health, food, nutrition, and community services, in order to address the root causes of lack of access to education.

4. Key legal principles

International (and regional) human rights law guarantees the right to free and compulsory education for all at the elementary level.[1] It encourages the development of accessible and affordable secondary education, including both general and vocational education, as well as higher education. The law also prohibits any form of discrimination in this regard, including on the grounds of being internally displaced.

All States must therefore ensure: that primary education is *available* to everyone and that secondary and higher education is progressively made available; that education is provided

---

[1] See, at the international level, Art. 26 of UDHR; Arts. 24(2)(e) and (f), 28 and 29 of CRC; Arts. 6, 13 and 14 of ICESCR; Art. 18 of ICCPR; Art. 5(e)(v) of ICERD; Arts. 10, 11(1)(c) and 14(2)(d) of CEDAW; the Convention against Discrimination in Education; and Principle 23(3)(4) of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. At the regional level, Art. 17 of AfCHPR and Arts. 4(d) and 12 of its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; Arts. 11 and 20(2)(a) of AfCRWC; Art. 13 of the Additional Protocol to the AmCHR in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Art. 34 of ArCHR; and Art. 2 of Protocol I to ECHR. See also the Education for All Framework and the Millennium Development Goals.

without discrimination and that it is physically and economically *accessible* to everyone; that education is of *acceptable* quality; and that its *adaptable,* meaning that it is flexible and responds to the best interests of each child or adult.[2]

States must also take steps to ensure full and equal participation of women and girls in all education and vocational training programmes. This includes taking all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, including through various forms of affirmative action.

International humanitarian law requires that children be provided with special respect and protection and given the care and aid they require, including access to safe education.[3] The law also prohibits direct and indiscriminate attacks or reprisals against civilian property, including schools, playgrounds and other educational facilities.[4] Intentionally directing attacks against such objects can constitute a war crime in both international and non-international conflicts.[5]

5. Key actors

At the global level, coordination of the humanitarian response to education is primarily the responsibility of the Education Cluster, which is co-lead by UNICEF and the Save the Children Alliance. A number of actors may need to be involved in order to ensure the success of education programmes, including:

- At the **national level**, displaced individuals and communities; Ministries of Education and Social Services; teachers' unions; students' unions: and local NGOs and civil society.
- At the **international level**, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP (school feeding programmes), UNFPA, UNDP, Save the Children Alliance, CARE, CCF, CRS, AED, NRC, IRC, Refugee Education Trust, and World Vision.

References

- *Minimum Standards on Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)*, 2004. Available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Urdu, Japanese, Thai, Bahasa Indonesian, and Bangla. **www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1240**
- *Technical Kit for Emergency Education, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)*. **www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1246**
- *Education in Emergencies: A Resource Kit*, UNICEF, 2006. **www.unicef.org**
- *Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction*, IIEP-UNESCO, 2006.
- *Safe Schools and Learning Environments: How to Prevent and Respond to Violence in Refugee Schools*, UNHCR, 2007. **www.refworld.org**
- "*Child Friendly Schools" and "Care Support in Schools,*" UNICEF, UNGEL Forum, Vol. 6, Number 1, March 2006. http://**www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html**
- *The Right to Education in Situations of Internal Displacement, in Manual for Domestic Law and Policy-makers on Implementing the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, forthcoming 2008.
- *Guidelines on Mental Health and Psycho-social Support in Emergency Settings*, Inter-agency Standing Committee, 2007. www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc

---

[2] See e.g. General Comment No. 13 (1999) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to education (E/C.12/1999/10). See also General Comment No. 11 on plans of action for primary education (E/C.12/1999/4) and General Comment No. 1(2001) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the aims of education (CRC/GC/2001/1).

[3] See Rule 135 of Customary International Humanitarian Law. Volume I: Rules (ICRC, 2005). See also Arts. 23-24, 38, 50, 76 and 89 of the Fourth Geneva Convention; Arts. 70(1), 77(1) and 78(2) of Additional Protocol l; and Art. 4(3).of Additional Protocol II.

[4] See e.g. Rules 1-2, 7, 9, 11-13 of Customary International Humanitarian Law. Volume I: Rules (ICRC, 2005). See also Arts. 48, 51 and 52 ofAdditional Protocol I; Art. 13 of Additional Protocol II; and Art. 21(2)(b) of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

[5] See e.g. Arts. 8(b)(ix) and 8(e)(iv) of the Statute of International Criminal Court.

Useful websites

- Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) **www.ineesite.org**
- Right to Education **www.right-to-education.org**
- United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) **www.unicef.org**
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) **www.unhcr.org**
- United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) **www.unesco.org**

Annex I
INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction

The INEE Standards contain minimum standards, indicators and guidance notes on ensuring access to quality education in humanitarian settings. The Standards, which are summarized below, are divided into five categories: (1) standards common to all categories; (2) access and learning environment; (3) teaching and learning; (4) teachers and other education personnel and (5) education policy and coordination **http://www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1240**

Minimum standards common to all categories	
Community Participation	
Participation	Emergency-affected community members actively participate in assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the education programme.
Resources	Local community resources are identified, mobilized and used to implement education programmes and other learning activities.
Analysis	
Initial assessment	A timely education assessment of the emergency situation is conducted in a holistic and participatory manner.
Response strategy	A framework for an education response is developed, including a clear description of the problem and a documented strategy for action.
Monitoring	All relevant stakeholders regularly monitor the activities, the education response and the evolving needs of the affected populations.
Evaluation	There is a systematic and impartial evaluation of the education response in order to improve practice and enhance accountability.
Access and learning environment	
Equal access	All individuals have access to quality and relevant education opportunities.
Protection and well-being	Learning environments are secure, and promote the protection and mental and emotional well-being of learners.
Facilities	Education facilities are conducive to the physical well-being of learners.
Teaching and learning	
Curricula	Culturally, socially and linguistically relevant curricula are used to provide formal and non-formal education appropriate to the particular emergency situation.
Training	Teachers and other education personnel receive periodic, relevant and structured training according to need and circumstances.
Instruction	Instruction is learner-centred, participatory and inclusive.
Assessment	Appropriate methods are used to evaluate and validate learning achievements.

Teachers and other education personnel	
Recruitment and selection	A sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers and other education personnel is recruited through a participatory and transparent process based on selection criteria that reflect diversity and equity.
Conditions of work	Teachers and other education personnel have clearly defined conditions of work, follow a code of conduct and are appropriately compensated.
Support and supervision	Supervision and support mechanisms are established for teachers and other education personnel, and are used regularly.
Education policy and coordination	
Policy formulation and enactment	Education authorities prioritize free access to schooling for all, and enact flexible policies to promote inclusion and education quality, given the emergency context.
Planning and implementation	Emergency education activities take into account national and international educational policies and standards and the learning needs of affected populations.
Coordination	There is a transparent coordination mechanism for emergency education activities, including effective information-sharing among stakeholders.

Part V – 17